

Michael F. Easley
Governor



State of North Carolina
Office of the Governor

For Release: **IMMEDIATE**
Date: February 17, 2007

Contact: Seth Effron
Phone: 919/733-5612

GOV. EASLEY ANNOUNCES *LEARN AND EARN* WINS INNOVATOR AWARD
Southern Growth Policies Board Recognizes Outstanding Initiative In Workforce Development

RALEIGH – Gov. Mike Easley announced today that North Carolina has received the Southern Growth Policies Board’ prestigious 2007 Innovator Award for the state’s *Learn and Earn* high school reform initiative. The award will be presented at the board’s Southern Workforce Summit Conference in St. Louis in June.

“This honor is another example of how the success of our revolutionary *Learn and Earn* initiative is being recognized around the nation,” said Easley. “We are keeping students in school by making education more relevant to their interests and future while showing that college is less intimidating and accessible.”

North Carolina’s *Learn and Earn* initiative, which was launched with the North Carolina New Schools Project and supported by The Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation. is one of 14 programs being recognized by the Southern Growth Policies Board. The Innovator Award recognizes outstanding initiatives in workforce development.

“Strong partnerships and a bold vision in North Carolina are helping others to see what’s possible in education,” said Margot Rogers, deputy director of education, Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation. “This award is well-deserved recognition of the work underway and the state-wide commitment to graduate all students ready for college and the workplace.”

There are 33 *Learn and Earn* early college high schools currently in operation around the state with plans to open 20 new sites in 2007-08 school year. The schools are located on community college or university campuses. While in a *Learn and Earn* high school, students can take college-level courses and obtain both a high school diploma and an associates degree or 2 years of transferable university credit after up to five years of study.

The *Learn and Earn* initiative is changing high schools so students receive the skills and training they need for high-skilled, better-paying jobs. When students know they can graduate with an advanced degree and practical job skills, they have an added incentive to stay in school. This new model of high school is geared to keep students in school, boost graduation rates and make sure North Carolina students have the knowledge, talent and skill the global economy demands.

Governor's Press Office
State Capitol, Raleigh, NC 27603-8001
(919) 733-5612 - Toll Free 1-800-662-7005
FAX (919) 733-5166